

# **Watergate: Villains and Heroes**

**1973 drawings by  
Trudy Myrrh Reagan**

## WHAT WAS WATERGATE ABOUT?

Nixon wanted a big win in the 1972 election. He wanted to know if the Democrats had any dirt on him, and who their big donors were. The Committee to Reelect the President (CREEP) planned to burglarize the Democratic National Committee office at the Watergate apartment complex in Washington, DC, to photograph information, and to place monitoring devices. During the second burglary on June 17, 1972, the burglars were arrested. Intriguingly, several of those arrested were anti-Castro Cubans. They were part of a group Nixon called The Plumbers (because they stopped leaks). They had done other black bag jobs for him, notably the break-in to the office of the psychiatrist of Daniel Ellsberg, who leaked the Pentagon Papers. Because Nixon was afraid this illegal activity might come to light if the Watergate burglary was tied to his office, he paid hush money to the low-level burglars to keep quiet. They demanded more and more money. Due to pressure from the judge on the burglary case, Judge John Sirica, one of the burglars, James McCord, spilled the beans.

On November 17th, 1973, Nixon declared in a televised question and answer period with the press, Nixon declared, "I am not a crook!", which only earned him derision. On July 27, 1974, the House Judiciary Committee voted in a televised session 27-11 for articles of impeachment. On August 9, 1974, Nixon resigned rather than be impeached by the full House. The new president, Gerald Ford, to the dismay of many, granted him a full pardon, making him immune from criminal indictments.

## James McCord



The Watergate conspirator who blew the case wide open  
by writing a letter to the judge at his burglary trial.  
Judge Sirica expressed doubt from the beginning that  
the conspirators acted alone.

I was moved to draw him because his head was a perfect egg!  
That started the whole series!

pencil, 8.5" X 11"

## Howard Baker



Republican from Tennessee, Vice-chair of the Watergate Hearings. Outwardly, he was prosecuting Nixon, asking "What did the President know and when did he know it?" Privately, he was reporting to Nixon after hours about how to limit the damage. He had a lot of charm, and was influential for years after.

pencil, 9" X 12"

## Senator Herman Talmadge, D. GA



Often arrived late after lunch,  
obviously drunk. His remarks  
in a thick Southern accent  
often provided comic relief.

pencil, 8.5" X 11",

## John Dean



Counsel to the President, was in charge of the coverup. When it was failing, he warned Nixon of a cancer growing on the presidency. When he saw he was to be the scapegoat, he turned on Nixon and told all.

This was my first portrait experiment with color.

crayon, 11" X 13"

## Senator Lowell Weicker



A Republican who was skeptical of Nixon, asked pointed questions. Later, he was governor of Connecticut.

oil pastel, 9" X 12"

# Jeb Stuart McGruder



White House aide and Deputy  
Director at the Committee to ReElect the President (with the  
ironic mnemonic, CREEP). No moral compass,  
but unswervingly loyal to Nixon.

So debonaire, I could practically smell the aftershave lotion.  
I made a conscious decision to choose colors that matched  
the personalities at this point. (I had a black and white TV)

oil pastel, 9" X 12"



## Hugh Sloan



Sloan was asked to open the safe and dole out bundles of bills from his safe at CREEP for hush money. Senator Sam Ervin pointedly asked, "And was this fer eleemosynary pu'poses?", which sent us all running to our dictionaries. It means "charitable."

oil pastel, 9" X 12"

## Maurice Stans



Chief fundraiser and Financial  
Officer at CREEP (Committee  
to Reelect the President)

oil pastel, 11" X 12"

## Fred LaRue



A.G. John Mitchell's aide who went to work for CREEP. Later he told investigators of Mitchell's role in the coverup.

In spite of his silk suit, he had a Mississippi country-boy manner, so I drew him roughly.

oil pastel, 11" X 14"

## Senator Sam Ervin, D. NC



Chair, Senate Select Committee  
on Watergate. He was a crusty grandfather  
figure, drawing on immense knowledge.  
His outrage was also immense.

His face, jowls, and especially his shocked eyebrows were  
always in motion. I don't know how I succeeded in drawing  
him.

oil pastel, 11" X 14"



## Tony Ulacewitz

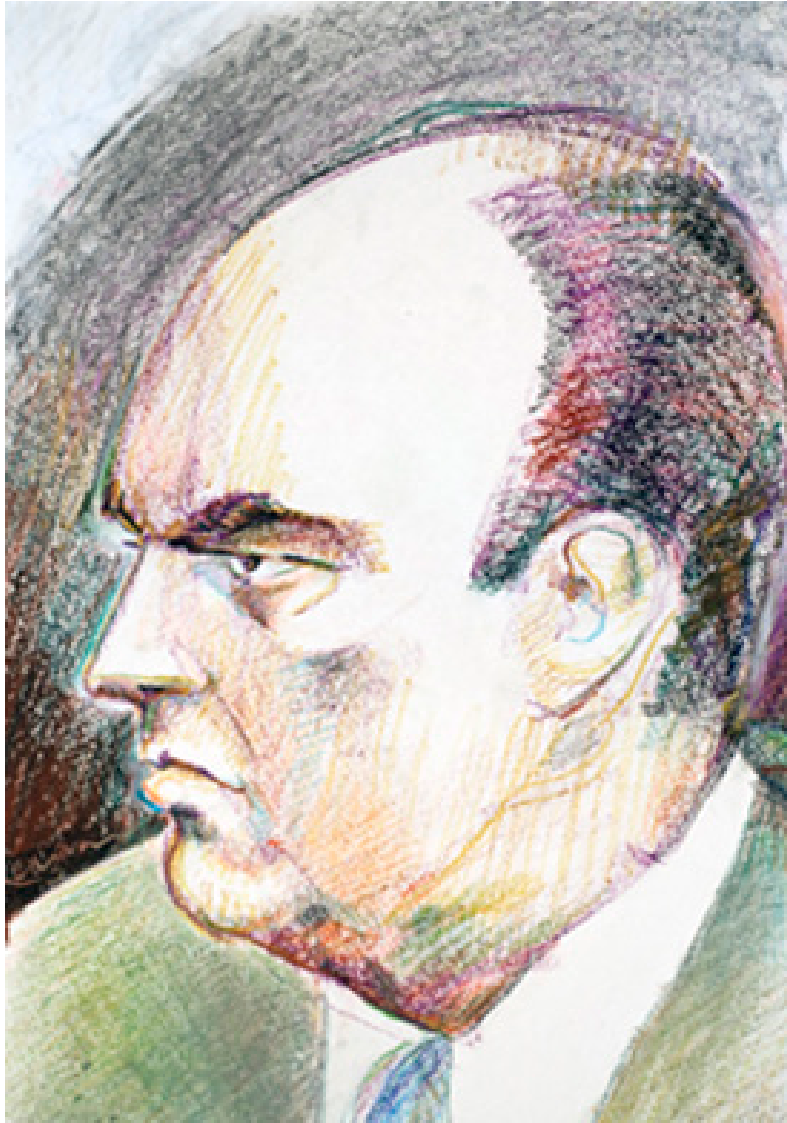


An ex-FBI agent with an amusing Brooklyn accent, was hired to deliver hush money to the Watergate burglars. When he reported that he was told to leave the bag of money "in da' phone boot", Southerner Senator Talmadge asked, "Suh, what's a phone boot?"

I colored him as if under the dim lights of dirty subway station..

oil pastel, 11" X 14"

## John Ehrlichman



Gatekeeper to the Oval Office #1  
A lawyer, and very adversarial.  
Not only did he deny involvement in  
Watergate to the committee, but was  
insulting, with a distinct sneer.

As the hearings moved to the really big fish,  
I was getting very proficient.

oil pastel, 11" X 14"

## H.R. Haldeman



Gatekeeper to the Oval Office #2.  
A public relations man, he was boyish and  
soft-spoken as he claimed he "forgot"  
crucial details.

I drew him as if under California sunshine.

oil pastel, 11" X 14"

# John Mitchell



Attorney General, sworn to uphold the law. It was he who signed secret wiretap orders. Chairman of CREEP, he ran Nixon's campaign. When the Watergate affair became a scandal, his wife, Martha, a colorful Southern belle, made phone calls to reporters about what she suspected. He had her put under lock and key.

oil pastel, 11" X 14"



## Henry Petersen



Assistant Attorney General. Though impeded in his investigation of Watergate by his boss and associates, he got 90% of the evidence anyhow.

oil pastel, 11" X 14"

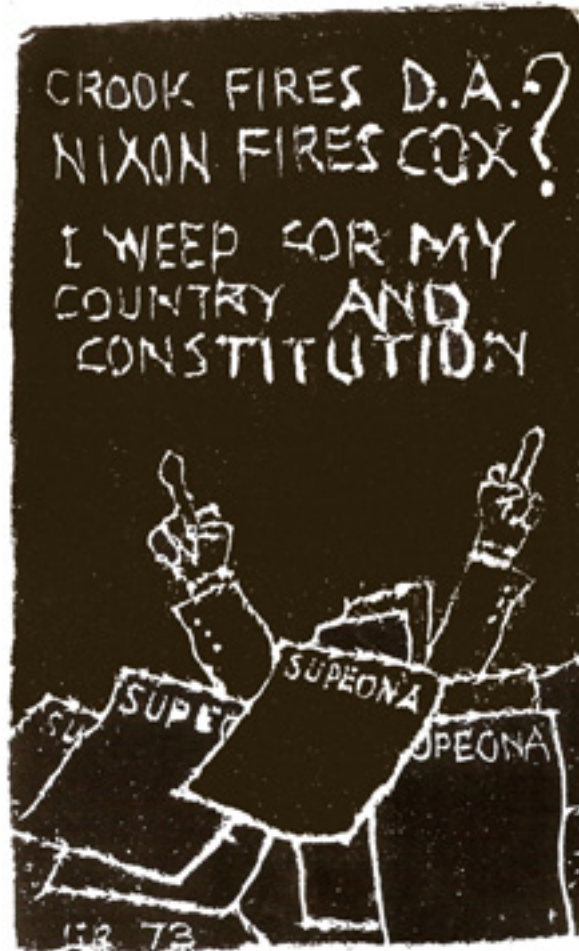
## Senator Sam Irvin admonishes them



Admonishing the miscreants, he quoted the Bible, and sometimes Shakespeare, who wrote: "What a tangled web we weave when first we practice to deceive."

oil pastel, 11" X 14"

## My reaction, sent to 100 senators



In Nov. 1973, Special Prosecutor Archibald Cox subpoenaed the crucial Oval Office tapes. Nixon demanded Cox be fired. Two successors to John Mitchell at the Department of Justice resigned before someone would do this.

I responded to this event, the so-called "Saturday Night Massacre," with this protest message. I could very well have sent xeroxes, but making the prints vented my rage. Later I learned that so many bags of protest mail filled the hallways at congress that work on legislation stopped.

Relief print on styrofoam meat tray.  
The original was a little larger, 4" X 7"

## **The Perverse Legacy of Watergate**

The 40th anniversary of the Watergate hearings remind us that we shamed Nixon out of office for illegal acts: burglarizing and wiretapping his opponents, then obstructing justice to conceal this. Secrets were bared. Citizen outrage fueled the move to impeach him, forcing him to resign. We congratulated ourselves: “The system worked!”

Why was Reagan not impeached in 1987 for the Iran-Contra scandal? And why does it matter? It was far worse, involving trading with the enemy, CIA operations, both covert and illegal. These impacted not only our country, but Nicaragua.

Perhaps it was because the affair was very convoluted, and tied in with patriotic fervor against communism. An abusive dictator, Somoza, had been overthrown in Nicaragua. A revolutionary government followed. It was being helped by the Russians. With the Boland Amendment, congress forbade intervention. Meanwhile, Iran was ruled by radical Islamic clerics, and Congress forbade us from selling arms to this enemy. Imagine our surprise, then, to learn that Reagan had secretly sold weapons to the Iranians, and used the money to fund a counterrevolutionary army in Nicaragua called the “Contras”. This was end run around congress and the Boland amendment. It was also against international law, as Nicaragua had not attacked us.

Another aspect of this that should have been covered in the 1987 Iran-Contra hearings was that Nicaraguans leaders in the CIA-backed Contras had a side deal going to raise still more money for their operation. Planes delivering weapons to Nicaragua returned to our cities full of cocaine to sell. An epidemic of crack cocaine addiction, together with the gang-related drug violence, played havoc with low income communities all over our country.

Why did this not come out in the hearings? Why was Reagan not impeached? Senator Daniel Inouye, who had been so strong in the Watergate hearings, took the committee into executive session whenever the cocaine trafficking issue seemed about to surface. National security! Secrecy! Yet it was already known. It was part of the evidence in a 1985 lawsuit being pursued by the public interest law firm, Christic Institute. I myself saw a videotape about this suit before the hearings in 1987. (Years later, the CIA quietly admitted it).

Inouye remarked later that he wanted to avoid impeachment at all costs, because he believed that after Watergate the country seemed weaker to our enemies, and the Russians took advantage of it. Dick Cheney, the lead Republican on the committee, defended executive privilege.

In Clinton’s case, the Republicans pushed for impeachment on grounds that the public had trouble taking seriously. The sharp tool for removing a president for egregious misconduct was dulled.

These set a terrible precedent. George W. Bush was not impeached even though he attacked a country that had not attacked us, Iraq, on the basis of false intelligence reports. He engaged in torture methods that put our country’s moral authority in the toilet. Under Obama, secrecy shrouds executive action. Assassinating enemy leaders lurking in Yemen or wherever is Standard Operating Procedure. Truth tellers face a long sentence for sedition.

The genius of democracy was supposed to have been that public outrage could get results, that our system had feedback. It was self-correcting. We had mechanisms for removing presidents that violated their oath of office. But today, no president worries about impeachment.